

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**A GENTLE NUDGE FROM THE LIBRARY:
LIBRARY TO USE COLLECTION AGENCY**

The Fontana Regional Library Board enacted a policy at its September 2008 board meeting to use a collection agency to help encourage patrons with overdue materials to return them to the library. The Library Board voted to pass the cost of this service on to each patron whose account will be handled by the collection agency.

This new policy was developed with fairness to all library patrons in mind. Materials not returned are not available for others to use or borrow. Also, if materials are not returned, in most cases, money from the library budget is used to replace them. This same money could much better be used to purchase new items for patron use instead of replacing non-returned items. Nearly \$143,000 worth of books hasn't been returned to the library. So far this fiscal year, there are 935 books that haven't been returned, at a cost of nearly \$17,000.

The Library Board hopes this practice will encourage all library borrowers to return items by the date due. Many library items may be renewed by calling the library, bringing the item to the library's circulation desk, or by logging on to the patron's account using the library's online catalog. Be sure to have the patron's library card available for renewal of library items. Also, book depositories for returning material when the library is closed are conveniently located for patron use.

The library will still notify patrons that their materials are overdue and patrons will have ample time to respond prior to being turned over for collection. Unique Management Services has been selected as the collection agency for the library. Unique Management works with libraries throughout the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom. They specialize in the recovery of overdue materials and have an excellent record of treating patrons professionally.

The library is serious about recovering overdue materials. Patrons who do not return materials are stealing from the library. Fortunately, only a very small percentage of patrons using the library do not return materials as agreed. This new policy will not affect the vast majority of patrons who return materials on time.

The Library is committed to provide excellent service and have materials available that patron's desire. Fontana Regional Library serves the people of Jackson, Macon and Swain Counties with libraries in Bryson City, Cashiers, Franklin, Highlands, Nantahala, Sylva, and with its Reading Rover bookmobile. Visit the Fontana Regional Library website at www.fontanalib.org for more information about your local library.